



VOLUME 29 ■ NUMBER 2

the VOYAGEUR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GROSSE ILE NATURE & LAND CONSERVANCY

CALENDAR

**GIBRALTAR BAY UNIT
(GBU) DETROIT RIVER
INT'L WILDLIFE REFUGE**
28820 E. River Rd.
Open to the Public Daily,
Dawn to Dusk

LOVELY LOTUS

Sun, Aug 22 @ 1:00pm
Airport Natural Area
Join us for a hike to learn
about the American Lotus
and its rich natural and
cultural history, as well as
the many other coastal
wetland plants we see
along the way.

**15th ANNUAL BENEFIT
DINNER IN SUPPORT OF
THE DETROIT RIVER INT'L
WILDLIFE REFUGE**

Thurs, Sept 9 @ 5:30pm
Silver Shores Waterfront
www.iwralliance.org/2021-benefit-dinner.html

THINGS WITH WINGS
Sun, Sept 19 @ 1:00pm
Airport Natural Area
Insects on the move - look
for praying mantids and
their egg cases (ootheca),
bees, butterflies,
dragonflies, more

EVENTS cont'd on page 10

"Money can't bayou love but it can bayou crawfish." — Louisiana restaurant

BARBARA808/PIXABAY



NATIVE SPECIES OF GROSSE ILE Crayfish (*Decapoda*)

BY BERT URBANI

Wow, for some reason, I thought I could whip up a quick, short, snappy article about crayfish – a critter of interest but not talked about very much – but I was wrong! There is a lot to know about crayfish. In the interest of space, I will give you the basic facts, and refer you to my 32-page source, *The Field Guide to Michigan Crayfish*, by the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources. It has everything you want to know about crayfish, but were (not) afraid to ask!

SCIENTIFIC NAME: According to the field guide, there are approximately 700 species of crayfish worldwide, all members of the order *Decapoda*, (10-footed crustaceans), including lobsters, shrimp, and crabs. Ten crayfish species are found in Michigan, all members of the family *Cambaridae*. Usually, in these articles we limit the Latin or Scientific Name to the Genus and

the Species, but these ten all have different Genus and Species names!

CHARACTERISTICS, HABITAT & LIFESTYLE:

Crayfish, or crawfish, or crawdads, as they are also called, look like small lobsters. Of their ten legs, the front two are their claws, with the dactyl "thumb" and the chela. The other four pairs of legs are their walking legs. They are not really able to swim, but powerful thrusts of their tails can propel them backwards. Crayfish are edible and it is legal to harvest native crayfish in Michigan waters with a recreational fishing license. Crayfish are found throughout the state of Michigan.

Of Michigan's ten species of crayfish, eight are native and two are considered nonnative and invasive. They are divided into three groups, based on their typical burrowing habits

— continued on Page 8

Thank You TO OUR SPECIAL DONORS

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IN MEMORY OF

**BARBARA & THOMAS
WOODWARD**

Doreen & Thomas
Woodward Jr.

IN MEMORY OF

KEITH ZOOK

Raymond Geist

THANK YOU TO

DOUG THIEL

For planning and
implementing the
memorial for

MARGARETE HASSERODT

In Memory of a GINLC member

Ray Kwiecien passed away in April after a long illness. Ray and his wife Sue were active members of GINLC, working on stewardship projects at the GBU and Sunrise Park until about four years ago when Ray's illness made it impossible for him to continue.

The GINLC extends sincere appreciation for the contributions of Ray and Sue, as well as condolences to Sue and the family for their loss.

Ray & Sue Kwiecien attended the GINLC 25th Anniversary dinner in May 2018.

Reflections From the President

BY PETER KANTZ

In last year's summer addition of the Voyageur, I wrote about two challenges the Conservancy was facing. 1) The COVID – 19 pandemic caused: our educational programs to be cancelled, the Airport Nature Area not to open to the public on Sunday afternoons, and many stewardship activities to be suspended. 2) High water levels led to issues on our waterfront properties, observation platforms were inaccessible, trees were dying due to submerged roots, and the shoreline was eroding.

This year things have changed dramatically. Vaccines are bringing the pandemic under control. We have a full slate of educational programs. The Airport Nature Area is open to the public May through October on Sunday afternoons from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, and stewardship activities are back on track. After record high water levels, water in the Great Lakes and Detroit River is beginning to recede. Low lying areas are becoming accessible and sandbags are being removed. Tree roots are drying out and some trees have survived being submerged, although others have died and will need to be cut down.

What a difference a year makes. We now know how rapidly things can change. We also know that we can adapt. We can find solutions. The world recognized the threat of COVID – 19 and worked as a global community to find a solution. Floods, droughts, violent storms, wildfires, record high temperatures, and melting ice caps present a threat that also requires a global solution. Our world leaders must recognize that climate change, like the pandemic, needs to be addressed as a global issue. Climate does not recognize national boundaries. Cooperation, science and a sense of urgency are necessary to address the issue. Politics is not a part of the solution. Success depends on our ability to work together. Failure is not an option.



*"We now know
how rapidly things
can change.
We also know that
we can adapt."*



GINLC Update on McLouth Steel Site: Remediation & Redevelopment

BY DOUG THIEL, GINLC board member and representative on the Community Advisory Group (CAG)



Summer 2019



After two years, the site is pretty much an open field.



Fall 2020



Summer 2021

The following is an update on progress at the McLouth Steel Site over the past few months.

Northern Portion of the Site

- ASTI Environmental requested an extension from April 12, 2021 until August 13, 2021 to complete their Phase 1 investigative report on the northern portion of the site. The extension was granted by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). The course of action taken in Phase 2 will be determined by the findings in Phase 1.

Southern Portion of the Site

- The two remaining stoves near the southeast corner of the property were demolished in late June. Extensive containment and dust suppression measures were utilized to minimize downwind human health and environmental impacts during the demolition.
- Torch cutting of the 3.5 skulls remaining on the property will resume in late July. The skulls have to be cut up into legally shippable pieces. Orange smoke is generated during this activity which has been a concern to a number of CAG members and the general public. As reported in my earlier quarterly update, the dispersion of contaminants contained in the smoke will be controlled by the contractor. They will spray the smoke that is generated with water and limit the activity to low wind periods. Contaminant sampling (iron and manganese) will also be conducted during these operations and the sampling results will be shared with the public.
- The public health assessment has started for this portion of the site. It is being conducted via a cooperative agreement between the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. As reported in my earlier quarterly updates, the public health assessment will explore and identify data gaps to see if the site contains an unknown exposure pathway that could adversely affect the community which will then have to be addressed.
- The EPA's remedial investigation of the site is now scheduled to start in the spring of 2022. The contractor who will be conducting the remedial investigation is Great Lakes Architect and Engineering Services.
- There have been two meetings of the CAG since the last newsletter update. One was held on April 8 and a second meeting held on July 22. These meetings focused on the update items discussed above. The next CAG meeting is tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2021. All GINLC members are encouraged to attend.

Year-Round Environmental Education

Under the leadership of GINLC Education Committee chair Erin Parker (whose full time job is at the Belle Isle Nature Center), the Conservancy has been enthusiastically welcoming the public to monthly outdoor environmental education events (see Page 1 for the upcoming programs).

MARCH: Spring Ponds, Pools, and Puddles – A walk through Meridian Woods focused on the vernal pools and their importance for amphibians like salamanders and frogs.

APRIL: Earth Day/Climate Change in Your Backyard – Zoom presentation with experts in the field (edited version coming).

MAY: Migrants on the Move (Spring migration) – Attendees noted the changes in Meridian Woods from March and observed some of the birds that call Southeast Michigan home during the spring and summer.

JUNE: Wetlands Wander – Erin and the group explored the Airport Natural Area to observe the wetlands and the different plants and animals that live in the area and their importance for humans.

JULY: Summer Twilight Adventure – On an early evening stroll at Centennial Farm, Erin and the attendees observed pollinators at the Butterfly garden and green frogs in the pond. We learned that green frogs sound like rubber bands. Since it was still daylight, no bats were out and the bat detector remained silent.



Top, Erin demonstrates the “two thumbs” tip on how to identify poison ivy in addition to “Leaves of 3, Let it be,” and Middle, directs attention to pollinators at the Butterfly Garden at Centennial Farm. Bottom, a dad and daughter observe a green frog in the pond at the Farm.



◀ GRAND PRIZE //
Florescent Dogwood
Sophia Kandes,
Riverview H.S.

2020/21
*Take it
Outside*
HIGH SCHOOL
PHOTO CONTEST
W I N N E R S

Neither rain nor snow nor sleet nor hail, nor pandemic ... the U.S. Postal Service? Yes, and the GINLC High School Nature Photo Contest! Running from September through May, here are the 2020-2021 winners! Students from 9 area high schools participated and submitted a total of 65 photos. The winners were given cash prizes. In addition to these ten winners, 8 honorable mentions were awarded. All 18 photos were displayed at IslandFest and will be displayed at the Trenton and Wyandotte libraries this fall.



Many thanks to GINLC Education Committee member Lori Riopelle who runs the entire contest, developing the annual contest poster, communicating with the teachers, receiving and organizing the emailed photos, coordinating with the judge, contacting the students, posting the winning photos on social media, delivering the certificates, prizes, and printed photos to the winning students, and arranging the photo displays at the libraries and other locations. Once again, Lori accomplished it all. Lori is a long-time member of the GINLC and a dedicated volunteer even beyond the photo contest. Thank you, Lori! Many thanks to our judge, Chris Zawistowicz (left). Chris is a retired chemical engineer originally from the UK. Now he is a travel and features writer and a dedicated GINLC volunteer.

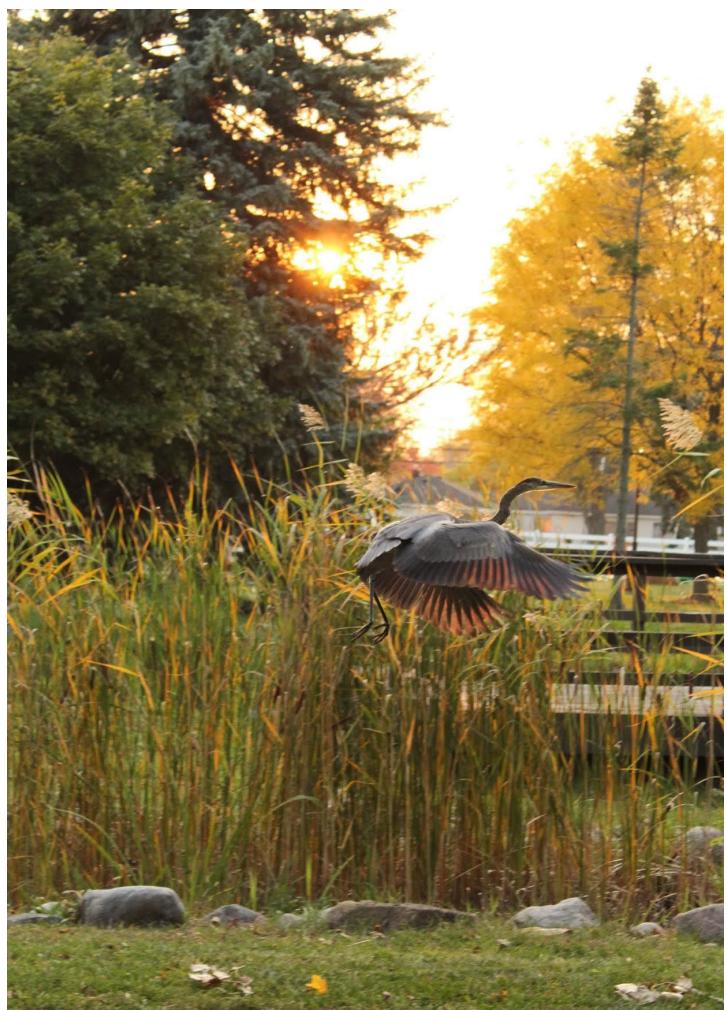
Thank you to the teachers who publicize the contest and encourage their students to participate.

GINLC 2020/21 – HIGH SCHOOL PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS!

FLORA ↓



FAUNA ↓ →



ABOVE LEFT:
1ST PLACE //
White Floaties
Zahraa
Alnakash,
Dearborn H.S.

BOTTOM LEFT:
2ND PLACE //
Turned To Ice
Renee Daniel,
Riverview H.S.

BOTTOM RIGHT:
3RD PLACE //
*A Garden of
Flowers*
Emily Brooks,
Roosevelt H.S.

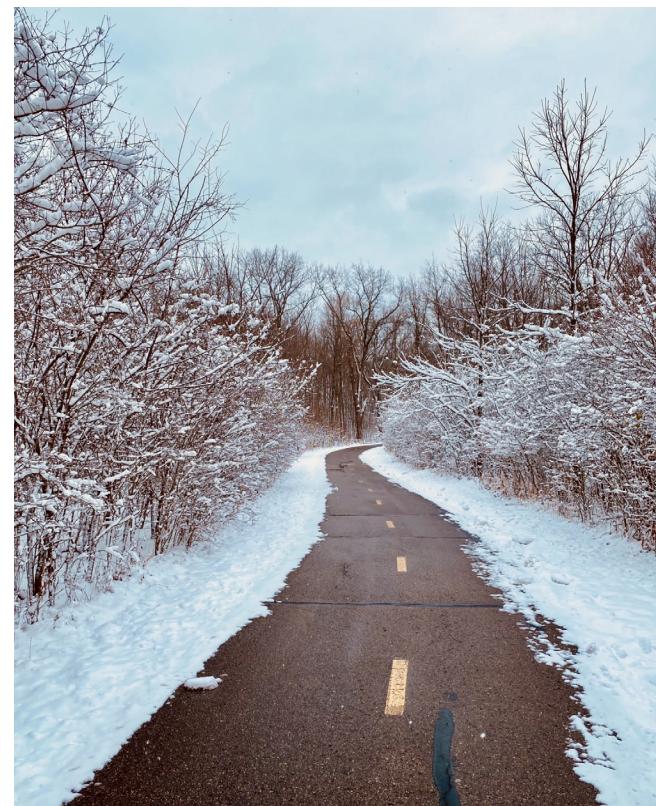
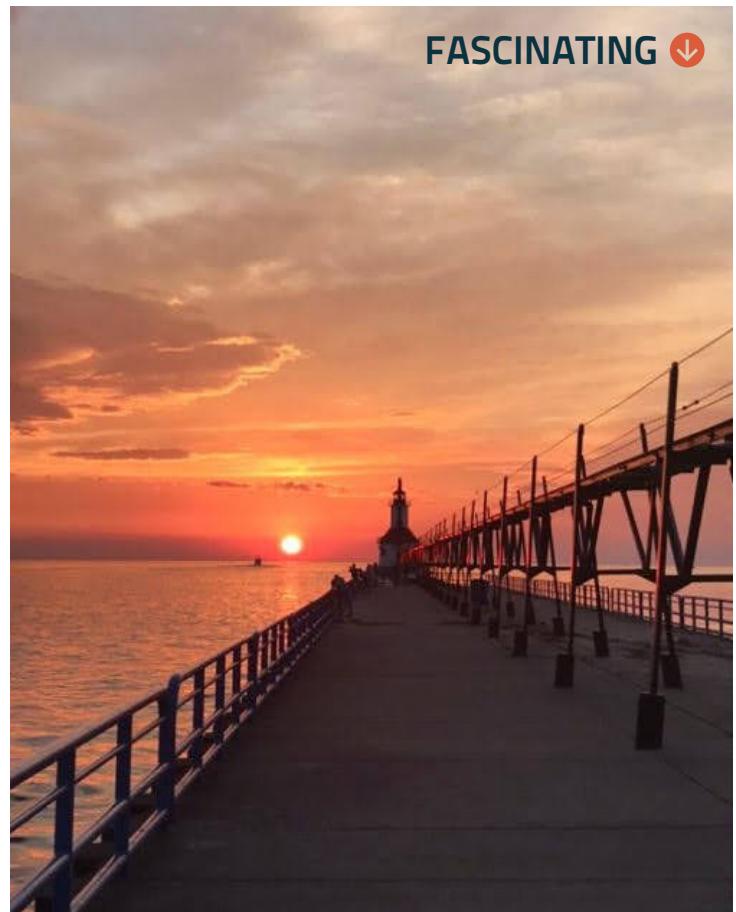
ABOVE RIGHT:
1ST PLACE //
Free Bird
Emily Brooks,
Roosevelt H.S.



ABOVE LEFT:
2ND PLACE //
Perched Egret
William Gruits,
Father Gabriel
Richard
(Ann Arbor) H.S.

CENTER:
3RD PLACE //
Empty Skies
Marina Scowden,
Riverview H.S.

BOTTOM LEFT:
3RD PLACE //
Brilliant Embers
Sophia Kandes,
Riverview H.S.



ABOVE RIGHT:
1ST PLACE //
Luna Roja
Eliouardo
Ledesma,
Riverview H.S.

BOTTOM RIGHT:
2ND PLACE //
*Winter Morning
Walk*
Devin Stephens,
TAllen Park H.S.

CRAYFISH, continued from cover

(primary, secondary, and tertiary burrowers) and habitats. Michigan's Primary Burrowers are the paintedhand mudbug (*Lacunicambarus polychromatus*), devil crayfish (*Lacunicambarus diogenes*) and digger crayfish (*Creaserinus fodiens*). They spend most of their lives underground, in complex tunnel systems as deep as the groundwater table. Primary crayfish burrows have telltale "chimneys" of dug-up dirt, frequently observed in fields a long distance from a river or pond. These species can live as long as 20 years and grow to 3 ½ to 4 inches long. Their burrows provide housing for many other species, including dragonflies and snakes.

Two Secondary Burrower species are native, including the White River crayfish (*Procambarus acutus*) and the calico, or paper-shell, crayfish (*Faxonius immunis*), while the red swamp crayfish (*P. clarkii*) is nonnative and invasive. These crayfish occupy more diverse habitats, spending the warmer months in the water. They burrow to escape drought, cold, and predation, and their winter dens are shallower and less complex than primary burrowers.

Tertiary Burrowers spend their entire lives underwater. The four species include the big water crayfish (*Cambarus robustus*), northern clearwater crayfish (*F. propinquus*), northern crayfish (*F. virilis*), and the nonnative rusty crayfish (*F. rusticus*).

DIET: Almost all aquatic plants, mollusks, insect larvae, mature insects, tadpoles, amphibian eggs, and small fish are common foods. They will even eat small rodents and birds when available.

REPRODUCTION & LIFESTYLE: Like many creatures with exoskeletons (the hard parts of their bodies are on the outside), when crayfish grow, they molt (shed) their old, hard exoskeletons so they can grow a new larger one, which is soft for a few days before hardening up. (For an amazing video of a blue crayfish molting, visit <https://thekidshouldseethis.com/post/a-molting-blue-crayfish>) One very interesting thing is that during molting, male crayfish alternate from one form which is capable of reproduction to a form that is not in the next molt. Crayfish mate in the spring and the females carry the fertilized, developing eggs in their bodies for 4 to 6 weeks. The eggs then attach to the female's tail with a self-produced adhesive called "glaire" and hatch by the end of spring. The young grow rapidly and molt 6 to 10 times in their first year.

STATUS: While some native crayfish have relatively narrow ranges, others, such as the devil crayfish, are readily found in ditches, farm fields, wet meadows, prairies, and floodplains in both the Upper and Lower peninsulas. Native species are at risk by the spread of the nonnative invasive species. Some

of these nonnatives invading our waters are from hobbyists dumping their aquarium crayfish into local waters or flushing them down the toilet, deeds that should never be done. The Field Guide states that "the red swamp crayfish is one of the most widespread invasive crayfish on the planet. Native to the southern U.S., it has invaded" Michigan and "several other U.S. states as well as Africa, Asia, Europe and South America. In other parts of the world, red swamp crayfish have extirpated native crayfish and invertebrates, affected



A display in the Refuge Visitor Center features a slice through a wetland that shows a crayfish in its underground den with its "chimney" at ground level.

amphibian populations, damaged and eroded levees, altered vegetation communities and directly affected water quality through intensive burrowing and foraging." Crayfish require clean water to thrive and so are considered a barometer of ecosystem health.

VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES: Primary burrower crayfish are mostly observed in the spring when they are out of their burrows and leading their young to water, or hunting outside their burrows on humid or rainy nights. Their "chimneys" are easy to spot in open fields, such as the Kobiljak Preserve on Thorofare Road. Other crayfish can be observed in shallow water or under rocks.



Stewardship

BY PETER KANTZ

Summer is the time of year when the GINLC stewardship crew swings into high gear. There is grass to cut, trails to restore, signs to repair and install, dead trees to remove and new trees to plant, and observation platforms and displays to be maintained. This work is done on Conservancy owned property and properties that the Conservancy stewards for other government agencies. A crew of 5 dedicated volunteers meets every Monday from 9:00 am to noon to work on these tasks. Special stewardship events are held, usually on the weekends, where additional volunteers show up to help out. The work is not easy, it involves physical labor and working outdoors, but the camaraderie and knowing that you are helping your community make it extremely rewarding.

There are three Township owned properties that we help maintain, Sunrise Park at the corner of Grosse Ile Parkway and East River, Intrepid Pond at the corner of Meridian and Intrepid and the Airport Natural Area at 28820 East River, adjacent to the Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. Once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, we will continue to steward the Gibraltar Bay Unit for the Fish and Wildlife Service. The above properties are in

Top Left, GINLC President Peter Kantz finishes the job the local beavers started on a tree at Sunrise Park. Top Right, Volunteer Bill Nachtrab pauses for a beauty pose as he reinstalls the spotting scope on higher ground at Sunrise Park. Left & Below, with lower water levels, the boardwalk to the observation deck in the Hennepin Marsh Gateway is usable again.



addition to the many properties GINLC owns on Grosse Ile, such as, Hennepin Marsh Gateway Preserve on Meridian ½ mile north of Bridge, Meridian Trailhead on Meridian north of Rucker and the Kobiljak Preserve on Thorofare north of Highland. These three properties are semi developed, contain educational signage, displays, observation platforms, etc. and are easily accessible. They require constant monitoring and maintenance. The Conservancy owns dozens of other properties that are left in their natural state and are monitored and maintained on a periodic basis.

Stewardship of our natural resources is a primary function of the Conservancy. It supports our educational programs and land acquisitions. It requires special equipment and the help of many volunteers. Funding for stewardship is supplied through GINLC memberships and donations. When volunteers do not have the experience or training for a specific activity, outside contractors are employed.

If you would like to help with these stewardship activities, please email info@ginlc.com.

CALENDAR

EVENTS CONT'D FROM COVER

"TAKE IT OUTSIDE" HIGH SCHOOL NATURE PHOTO CONTEST BEGINS

Thurs, Oct 7

FRIENDS OF DETROIT RIVER ANNUAL MEETING & DINNER

Sat, Oct 9 @ 6:00pm
Wyandotte Boat Club
detroitriver.org

THE NATURE OF HALLOWEEN

Sun, Oct 31 @ 1:00pm
Airport Natural Area
"Creepy" nature/fall phenology

GINLC ANNUAL MEETING

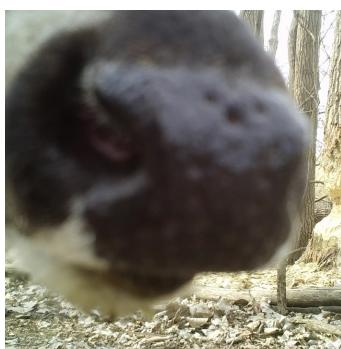
Sat, Nov 6
Time & Location TBD

OWL PROWL

Fri, Nov 12 @ 6:30pm
Centennial Farm
Learn about owls,
dissect an owl pellet,
observe them outside

SOLSTICE HIKE

Sun, Dec 19 @ 1:00pm
Meridian Woods
We'll look for signs of winter, and learn about winter adaptations, animal homes



MYSTERY PHOTO: What is it?

Find answer in Fall issue!

GINLC Awards a High School Scholar

Twenty-eight years ago, GINLC founder Dr. Bruce Jones and other committed residents of Grosse Ile came together with two main goals – to protect and preserve Grosse Ile's precious natural areas, and to educate and inspire future generations of conservation stewards to carry on that work on our island home, and throughout the world. To that end, the GINLC established the annual Dr. Bruce Jones Memorial Scholarship for the Grosse Ile High School senior who has exhibited academic excellence and dedication for protecting our natural environment. This year, that student is Emma Griffin.



Education committee members Bert Urbani (l) and Madeleine Jones (r) congratulate scholarship winner Emma Griffin.

Emma's deeds include being a member of the Grosse Ile High School Environmental Awareness Club during her entire high school career, as well as its president since May 2019. She and her team worked tirelessly (pre-covid) to expand paper and plastic recycling at all Grosse Ile schools, not just the high school. Her passion to address plastic pollution goes beyond our small island and the Detroit River, as she hopes to spend a college summer pulling plastic from the ocean off the coasts of Australia. Emma also served as one of the liaisons to the Grosse Ile Open Space Committee and has been

invaluable in that role. She plans to achieve a degree in chemistry and then become a researching physician. In her own words, Emma says, "I want to know that I have done all that I could do to move the world forward for the better."

Congratulations to Emma Griffin, the recipient of the 2021 GINLC Dr. Bruce Jones Memorial Scholarship. Best wishes from the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy to Emma while she pursues her educational and career goals, as she wrote, "wholeheartedly, with love at the forefront of it all."

2 Easy Ways to Give



KROGER CARDS

Enroll your Kroger Plus card to benefit the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy!
Go to www.kroger.com/communityrewards to enroll.
Thanks!



AMAZON SMILE

Don't forget to smile — Sign up for Amazon Smile! Select Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy as your charitable organization, and then 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products will be donated to GINLC.



Margarete Hasserodt Memorial Dedication Ceremony

BY DOUG THIEL

A warm, sunny spring day greeted a large crowd of family and friends gathered to attend a memorial dedication ceremony for Margarete Hasserodt at Centennial Farm. The memorial ceremony was held on May 22 to celebrate Margarete's many contributions to a variety of Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy beautification projects throughout Grosse Ile. The memorial consists of a large boulder with an engraved plaque and two native Sugar Maple trees. The memorial was co-sponsored by the GINLC and the Island Beautification Committee, another group that benefited greatly from Margarete's dedication and expertise.

Several GINLC Board members spoke during the dedication including Doug Thiel, Amanda Philips, Liz Hugel and Pam Frucci who also represented the Island Beautification Committee. Margarete's daughter Ute O'Connor also spoke on behalf of the family.

It was a fitting tribute to Margarete who lived a life filled with love of family, the natural environment, and Grosse Ile.

Margarete's family gathered by the memorial plaque and trees.

IslandFest It Up!

IslandFest returned this year and the GINLC participated once again, in the parade handing out wild-flower seeds, and as an exhibitor. Festival goers got a chance to see the winners of the GINLC High School Nature Photo Contest, "Take It Outside."



The GINLC booth at IslandFest with the photo contest winners.



John Leon, Tommy Erikson, and Rika Erikson carry the GINLC banner on the parade route.



Saving Sugar Island

BY BERT URBANI

The planned shoreline stabilization and habitat restoration of Sugar Island will soon be underway! Our friends in the *Friends of the Detroit River* are overseeing the project which is funded by a *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative* grant. The project includes the creation of five barrier islands on the southern end of the island to protect the shoreline from wind and wave erosion, as well as providing areas of shallow water and substrate for fish spawning. Thankfully, this gem will not disappear like Mamajuda Island, which today exists only in history books and as a dot on maps.



Got Beavers? How to Protect Your Trees

Industrial pollution, reckless toxic chemical use, habitat loss, and overhunting caused the disappearance of many species in the Downriver area. Many improvements have occurred and wildlife species such as bald eagles, white fish, and beavers have returned.

Beavers were overhunted during the 17th and 18th centuries, and none had been seen on the U.S. side of the Detroit River since 1877. Then in 2008, they appeared at the DTE power plant across from Belle Isle. Now they are showing up throughout the SE Michigan, including Grosse Ile.

First appearing at the Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge on E. River Road, beavers have been making their way up the Thorofare Canal, to the dismay of homeowners in their path.

It is possible for humans and beavers to co-exist, however, swift action must be

taken to protect trees soon after beaver activity is noted.

The Beaver Institute website provides excellent photos and descriptions of how to install 2"x4" mesh wire fence cylinders around individual trees. Done properly, and leaving room for tree growth, this method is 100% effective. Sand-painting tree trunks is another approach, mixing 5 oz of Mason Sand (30-70 mil) per quart of latex paint (color matched to tree bark).

Visit <https://www.beaverinstitute.org/problems-solutions/tree-damage/> for details.

The GINLC is looking for an entrepreneurial soul who might want to offer these services to residents. Email us at ginc.gi@gmail.com.



TO RECEIVE EVENT NOTICES & NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL, CONTACT US AT INFO@GINLC.ORG



SUMMER 2021

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To sign up for a
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PETE KANTZ
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To promote for the public benefit the preservation,
stewardship and understanding of the natural resources in
the Township of Grosse Ile and surrounding area.

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